



# STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

INVESTIGATION REPORT  
FIRE/ARSON INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU

**SENSITIVE**



Case #	19-08-007	Priority	1	Investigator	Thomas Henry	Status	Active
Day of Fire	Wednesday	Date of Fire	06/05/2019	Time of Fire	1200	Cause of Fire	Accidental
Date of Request	06/05/2019	Date Case Assigned	06/06/2019	Date of Investigation	06/06/2019		
City of Fire	Roswell	County of Fire	Chavez				
Location of Fire	1004 W. Hobson Rd., Building 1630 W						
Type of Fire Investigation	Structure	Injuries	yes	#	Deaths	yes	# 1

## OWNER

Full Name	City of Roswell					Phone #	(575) 637-6200		
Address	425 N Richardson Ave								
Race	n/a	Other	n/a	Sex	n/a	Age	N/A	Date of Birth	n/a
Social Security #	- -n/a				Driver's License #	n/a			
Insurance	No	Insurance Company Name	unknown						
Policy #						Effective Dates		To	
Amount of Policy:	Structure\$					Contents \$			
Adjusters Name						Adjusters Phone #			
Agents Name						Agents Phone #			
Agents Address									

## OCCUPANT

Full Name	n/a					Phone #			
Address									
Race		Other		Sex		Age		Date of Birth	
Social Security #	- -				Driver's License #				
Insurance	No	Insurance Company Name							
Policy #						Effective Dates		To	
Amount of Policy:	Structure\$					Contents \$			
Adjusters Name						Adjusters Phone #			
Agents Name						Agents Phone #			
Agents Address									

☐ DISCOVERED ☐ REPORTED FIRE

Full Name	Roswell Fire Dept. Fireworks crew					Phone #			
Address									
Race		Other		Sex		Age		Date of Birth	
Social Security #	- -				Driver's License #				

## REQUESTOR

Full Name	Matt Miller					Phone #			
Address									
Race		Other		Sex		Age		Date of Birth	
Social Security #	- -				Driver's License #				

## MOTOR VEHICLE

Type of Vehicle		Year		Make		Model	
Vehicle Use		Color		V.I.N. #		L.P.#	

## OTHER INFORMATION

Other Investigating Agencies	NMSP, ATF						
Responding Fire Departments							
Weather Conditions		Wind Direction	To	Velocity			

## ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

Arson Lab Utilized	NO	Smoke Detectors Present Unknown	K-9 Utilized	
Approved By		Date		



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### SYNOPSIS

On June 5, 2019 New Mexico State Fire Marshal's Office received a report of an explosion that occurred on June 5, 2019 at the address of 1004 W. Hobson Rd., Building 1630 W in Roswell, NM. The building was on property belonging to the City of Roswell Municipal Airport. The incident occurred while firefighters with the Roswell Fire Department were in the building preparing for the upcoming Fourth of July fireworks event. Twelve firefighters were on scene and sustained various injuries. Two of the firefighters sustained significant burn injuries and were flown to a burn center in Lubbock, Texas for further evaluation and treatment. On July 21, 2019, one of the two firefighters died as a result of complications from his injuries. This Investigator (Thomas Henry) Investigator Shane Woodward, Deputy Fire Marshal John Kondratick and Deputy Fire Marshal Raymond Torres responded to this location on June 6, 2019. Personnel from and NMSFMO assisted NMSP and ATF in this investigation. For full Investigation report please reference ATF Investigation Report # 785121-19-0026 . This report documents the investigation actions of the NMSFMO Fire Investigations Bureau and is a supplement to the ATF Investigation Report. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the cause of the explosion/fire is ACCIDENTAL in nature.

### BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

The building involved was a concrete masonry block structure with a metal roof and cement foundation and was approximately 2,625 sq. ft. An additional concrete pad was adjacent to the structure with a conex box that was used for the storage of fireworks used for the City of Roswell's annual fireworks display. A metal roll

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up door was located on the north of the structure. Additionally, a set of double doors located west of the metal roll up door on the north side and another double door was located near the southeast corner of the structure. Electrical service entered the structure in the northwest corner of the structure and was active at the time of the incident. For diagram of building and debris field refer to ATF report.

### WITNESS STATEMENTS

According to City of Roswell Fire Marshal Matt Miller, the following firefighters were present in or outside of the structure at the time of the explosion:

- Fire Marshal Matt Miller
- Chris Stuart
- Jose Munoz
- Mark Bracken
- Buddy Nutt
- Jeff Stroble
- Hoby Bonham
- Austin Hinsley
- Warren Aldrich
- Kenny Barncastle
- Tucker Burns

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NMSFMO personnel assisted NMSP and ATF with this investigation which included witness interviews, scene photos, assisting with debris removal, and scene reconstruction. A meeting with all agencies involved was held at Roswell Fire Department Station #1 located at the address of 200 S Richardson Ave, Roswell, NM 88203. The result of this meeting was to determine tasks for each agency involved. The NMSFMO was tasked with assisting ATF agents in conducting witness interviews. The NMSFMO personnel assisted in interviewing the following witnesses/victims on the day of June 6, 2019

FF- Buddy Nutt

FF- Austin Hensley

FF- Jose Munoz

### *Interview with Buddy Nutt*

Deputy Fire Marshall John Kondratich, Deputy Fire Marshal Ray Torres and Investigator Shane Woodward performed the interview with FF-Buddy Nutt. (See attached Supplemental Report at the end of this report).

### *Interview with Austin Hensley*

Deputy Fire Marshall John Kondratich and Deputy Fire Marshal Ray Torres assisted ATF Special Agent Jared Kattah and ATF Special Agent Nicholas Dilello in the interview with FF-Austin Hensley. Please refer to ATF Investigation Report #785121-19-0026 for interview details.

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### *Interview with Jose Munoz*

This interview was conducted by SA Rosalinda Montes, SA Greg Boeglin from the ATF and Investigator Thomas Henry from NMSFMO. Please refer to ATF Investigation Report #785121-19-0026 for interview details.

### **FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION**

On June 7<sup>th</sup> and June 8<sup>th</sup>, the fire scene examination was conducted by ATF Special Agent Certified Fire Investigators with assistance from the New Mexico State Fire Marshals and New Mexico State Police. New Mexico State Fire Marshal's assisted ATF in this investigation by taking scene photos, assisting in debris removal, and reconstructing the scene. Heavy equipment was used to remove large debris prior to crews making entry to determine the origin and cause of the explosion. Personnel from the New Mexico State Fire Marshal's Office assisted ATF agents with identifying locations of fireworks equipment, furniture, and firefighters prior to the explosion. No evidence was collected from the scene by NMSFMO personnel.

### **FIRE INVESTIGATION CONCLUSIONS:**

After consultation with ATF Certified Fire Investigator SA Dector Celaya, it was concluded that:  
*"Based on multiple witness statements an explosion occurred while the firefighters were fusing the aerial shells with electric matches. An explosion occurred when the fireworks shell that Firefighter Hoby Bonham was holding ignited and exploded, functioning as designed. The initial explosion caused other explosions leading to*

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*the explosion/consumption of all the firework shells inside the structure. The build-up of pressure from the exploding shells caused the walls of the structure to be blown out. The burning pyrotechnic material being released ignited other shells as well as other combustible materials inside the structure. The first fuel ignited was the black powder and pyrotechnic material inside the initial shell that functioned as designed."* Item #48, Page 22, ATF Roswell Fireworks Explosion Investigation Report #785121-19-0026

Additionally:

*"It is the opinion of SACFI Dector Celaya that the fire that occurred on June 5, 2019 at 1004 W. Hobson Road, building 1630W in Roswell, NM was accidental."*

Item #55, Page 24, ATF Roswell Fireworks Explosion Investigation Report #785121-19-0026

After reviewing the fire scene, reviewing witness interviews, and consulting with ATF investigation personnel, it is determined that the fire is **ACCIDENTAL** in nature.

## FIREFIGHTER INJURIES

Twelve firefighters were in and around the building at the time of the explosion. Two firefighters sustained significant burn injuries and were transported to the burn center in Lubbock, Texas for treatment. The remaining ten were treated on scene and/or at the local emergency room and were later released.

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### ROSWELL FIREFIGHTER HOBY BONHAM

Firefighter Hoby Bonham was one of the two firefighters transported to the Lubbock burn unit for treatment. He was released on June 29, 2019 while he continues outpatient treatment.

### ROSWELL FIREFIGHTER JEFF STROBLE

Fire Apparatus Operator/Firefighter Jeff Stroble was the other firefighter transported to Lubbock for treatment. On July 21, 2019, FAO Stroble died after battling to recover from his injuries sustained from the June 5<sup>th</sup> explosion.

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### Interview with Roswell Firefighter Buddy Nutt

On Thursday, June 6, 2019, Deputy Fire Marshal John Kondratick, Fire Investigator Shane Woodward, and Deputy Fire Marshal Ray Torres with the NM State Fire Marshal's Office interviewed City of Roswell Firefighter Buddy Nutt (W/M DOB [REDACTED]-74) at the Roswell Central Fire Station. Firefighter Nutt advised that on Wednesday, June 5, Roswell firefighters were matching fireworks at the city storage facility located at the city municipal airport for preparation of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July show. He advised firefighters from Station #4 and #6 arrived in fire apparatus and that he and Firefighter Munoz arrived in their personal vehicles. Firefighters arrived at the storage facility at approximately 9 AM and began removing Class C fireworks (3,4,5,6 inch shells) from the Conex storage box into the storage building for sorting and matching. He advised that once the fireworks were matched, they were placed into the storage rails (aisles) located west of the sorting table. Firefighter Nutt stated that they had been working for about three hours and were down to the last box of the day when he heard a pop and a projectile went passed him. He advised that he was standing in the aisle near the boxes west of the table at this time and the projectile came from the direction of the table. Firefighter Nutt stated that he was standing next to Firefighter Jeff Stroble at this time in the aisle and Firefighter Hoby Bonham was at the table. He advised that he was not completely sure of the location of other firefighters in the building. He stated that he was able to quickly evacuate the building from the southeast door to exit and that he began rescue and fire suppression efforts. Firefighter Nutt provided us a diagram detailing items in the building.

Firefighter Nutt advised that the building was a concrete block building with no windows and had doors on the north and south sides. He stated all electrical devices such as radios and telephones were located inside the north door.

Firefighter Nutt advised that the skies were overcast at the time and that a storm was moving in from the west. He stated that it started raining once the fire was extinguished.

Firefighter Nutt did not have information as to what may have started the fire.

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